



Fever – General

Fever is a higher-than-normal body temperature. A normal temperature varies with age, how it is measured (mouth, underarm, rectal, or ear) and time of day.

In an adult, an oral temperature around 37°C (98.6°F) is considered normal. A temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) is considered a fever. Fever is not a disease but can be a symptom of illness. Fever is most commonly caused by infection. An oral temperature is used most commonly. An ear thermometer will only be accurate if it is positioned as recommended by the manufacturer. Most electronic thermometers are fast and accurate. Older persons can develop confusion during a fever.

SYMPTOMS

- Feeling warm or hot, sweats.
- Fatigue or feeling exhausted.
- Aching all over.
- Chills, shivering.

TREATMENT

- Medications may be used to control temperature such as Tylenol® or Motrin®.
- Do not give aspirin to children or teenagers with fevers. There is an association with Reye's syndrome. Reye's syndrome is a rare but potentially deadly disease.
- If an infection is present and medications have been prescribed, take them as directed. **Finish the full course of medications until they are gone.**
- Sponging or bathing with room-temperature water may help reduce body temperature. DO NOT use ice water or alcohol sponge baths.
- DO NOT over-bundle in blankets or heavy clothes.
- Drinking adequate fluids during an illness with fever is important to prevent dehydration.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Rest and adequate fluid intake are important.
- Drink enough water and/or fluids to keep your urine clear or pale yellow.
- Dress according to how you feel, but do not over-bundle.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You are unable to keep fluids down, vomiting or diarrhea develops.
- You develop a skin rash.
- An oral temperature above 39°C (102°F), or a fever which persists for over 3 days.
- You develop excessive weakness, dizziness, fainting or extreme thirst.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing develops
- You pass out.
- You feel you are making little or no urine.
- New pain develops that was not there before (such as in the head, neck, chest, back, or abdomen).
- You cannot hold down fluids, vomiting and diarrhea persist for more than a day or two.
- You develop a stiff neck and/or your eyes become sensitive to light.

This general advice cannot cover all possible problems. If there is concern, please contact your physician, healthcare provider or the Emergency Department without delay.



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